

**SUMMARY OF THE
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 8, 1998**

The Proficiency Testing Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Tuesday, December 8, 1998, by teleconference. The meeting was led by its chair, Ms. Anne Rhyne of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The principal purpose of the meeting was to discuss unresolved issues and to prepare for the Fourth NELAC Interim Meeting in January, 1999.*

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Rhyne began the meeting by reviewing action items from the November 9-10, 1998 meeting in Norfolk, VA. The minutes for that meeting were approved by the committee. Ms. Rhyne said that Chapter 2 of the Standards had been turned in for posting on the NELAC Website and no more changes will be made before the Interim meeting.

LIST OF ANALYTES

Ms. Rhyne spoke with Ms. Pauline Bouchard, Chair of the Program Policy and Structure Committee, about inclusion of an analyte list in Chapter 1. Ms. Bouchard said that her committee has discussed this before and had seen no apparent benefit for including such a list within the Standards. It would require regular updates and might make the Standards too prescriptive. If laboratories were accredited by method, a list of analytes would be necessary, but NELAC accreditation is done by analyte.

Several members of the PT Committee expressed a preference that a consistent analyte list exist somewhere. One reason is because the list of analytes for accrediting authorities can vary from State to State. One State may accredit for only fifteen analytes within a certain program, whereas another may accredit for thirty. If a laboratory needs to be accredited for more analytes than its primary accrediting authority offers (e.g., to work in another State), what should it do?

The committee discussed the possibility of a minimum scope of accreditation for the primary accrediting authorities, however no resolution was reached on this issue. Mr. Tom Coyner volunteered to write an Issue Paper. After the PT Committee has reviewed it, the paper will be shared with the Program Policy and Structure Committee to help facilitate discussions. This topic will be open for further discussion at the Interim Meeting.

CHAPTER 2

Section C.5.0 and C.5.4

Mr. Chuck Wibby read some proposed language for Section C.5.0 that would delete the reference to “pass/fail” and also add some additional language for Section C.5.4. Mr. Wibby will send the proposed language to Ms. Rhyne and it will be open for discussion at the Interim Meeting.

Environmental Toxicology Update (Appendix G)

Dr. Faust Parker reported that few people attended the subcommittee’s teleconference on December 4, 1998 but that there did not seem to be any problems. Decisions regarding PTs for whole effluent toxicity (WET) testing are up in the air because of Discharge Monitoring Report Quality Assurance (DMRQA). As a default, there is no PT requirement for environmental toxicology; laboratories would be certified by on-site assessment only. Dr. Parker will bring copies of the Appendix to distribute at the Interim meeting.

Air (Appendix H)

Ms. Lara Autry said that a starting outline for Appendix H should be complete by the end of this week, and she will bring copies of it to the Interim meeting.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Ms. Barbara Burmeister informed the committee that the FAQs are almost done and she will send them out to the committee for review. Once the committee has had a chance to comment, the FAQs will be sent to Dr. Irene Ronning of the Membership and Outreach Committee. Ms. Burmeister will also bring copies of the FAQs to the Interim meeting.

EPA/NIST ITEMS

Mr. Robert Graves, and other representatives from EPA and NIST, were unable to attend today’s teleconference. Therefore, discussion of the following agenda items has been delayed:

- Mr. Graves proposal regarding the number of analytes in PTs, zero or non-detect values, random number generator. How does this affect the 3-year requirement?
- Federal Register Notice (which requires a PT for each method)
- Handbook 150-xx (inclusion of homogeneity, stability, and verification testing)

DMRQA

Ms. Rhyne said that Mr. John Helms of EPA had called her as he is trying to obtain feedback on the PT Committee's questions regarding acceptance of NELAC PTs for DMRQA. Once he has the information, Mr. Helms will contact the committee.

INTERIM MEETING AGENDA

Ms. Betsy Dutrow, EPA, reviewed the agenda for the Fourth NELAC Interim Meeting. The opening plenary begins at 11 a.m. on Monday, January 11, 1998. The PT Committee will meet on Tuesday from 1:30-4:30 p.m. and again on Wednesday from 9-12 a.m. The closing plenary is scheduled for Wednesday from 2:30-4:30 p.m. This will be followed by an Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) Open Forum from 5-6 p.m. Although the Interim meeting officially ends on Wednesday, Ms. Dutrow invited members to stay and attend the ELAB meeting on Thursday from 8:30-12:30 a.m.

Ms. Rhyne said that a PT Committee draft agenda for the Interim meeting has been turned in to Ms. Dutrow. It is very similar to the agenda used for the meeting in Norfolk, with the same sections assigned to the same committee members. In addition, Appendices G and H have been added to the agenda and will be reviewed by Dr. Parker and Ms. Autry.

The Issue Paper on State selection of their PT providers, written by Mr. Coyner, will be available at the Interim meeting.

**ACTION ITEMS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 8, 1998**

Item No.	Action Item	Date To Be Completed
1.	Mr. Tom Coyner will write an Issue Paper about a “master” list of analytes for NELAC.	Interim meeting
2.	Committee members will prepare for the Interim meeting and make copies of any materials (e.g., new appendices, issue papers) needed for distribution.	Interim meeting

**PARTICIPANTS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 8, 1998**

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